



"The boy stared in wonder straight up into the girl's eyes."

disqualified for fouling,—a bad ride by a usually A-1 jockey. Result, money lost in both bets and stake, besides the hundred and other things that cost money in starting a horse in a big race. Then Shumber Boat, an ordinarily sure-footed mare, stumbled during a workout just a week before the ten-thousand-dollar Orchard Stakes she was groomed to win, and falling clumsily broke her leg. Result, a bullet and more money lost. After that came The Gondolier with a sprung tendon, meaning no more racing for him, and the stud for his. Then one after another came close, hard luck races lost by a head or a nose. Only Jupiter seemed to win with any regularity, and even he lost some heart-breaking races.

Things went from bad to worse, and the Roderick money disappeared into the air from which it had come; this time on drab, colorless wings, swifter even than those of blue and gold. One by one horses were sold and boys and jockeys dropped away, the latter glad to get away from a "jinx" stable where the soft pickings were rapidly becoming hard. Then Mattern, who had between times been paying assiduous court to Miss Lucy, received his congé from that young woman and left the Roderick employ in a rage.

And finally, to cap it all, just prior to the Suburban, Big Bill Roderick took an extra whisky too much, and apoplexy took him.

After that came the accounting and the preparations for the sale, the posting of sales notices, of pedigrees, the prospective buyers snooping round the stalls looking over the horses, feeling their legs for bad tendons, swellings, and the like, with the dread, impending feeling of calamity hovering in the air, when there were no races to be run: just a long string of days to wait through before the end,—the day when, according to the poster on the stable door, "Jupiter, stallion, black, 16 hands, by Mars out of Cherry B, entered for the Suburban," would be sold.

At last the day dragged round. To Carrots it meant the end. He was going to lose Jupiter! Yet he was game,—even if he was, Jupiter must be ready. Silently, earnestly, with quivering lips and twitching face, a little red-headed duffer rubbed his horse until his coat shone black and satiny like jet, and then, after everything was ready, throwing his arms round the horse's great neck, burst into an uncontrollable flood of tears; while Legs sat on his haunches with one fore paw raised and one ear cocked up, eyeing the proceeding with all the inquisitive wonder of a fool dog, lolling out his tongue, tossing his head, and snapping his jaws gleefully once in awhile as if to invite his master to come and play with him and forget it all.

And it was a quiet, sad Miss Lucy who came to the door of the stall and leaning over it watched them. For a moment she did not speak. Perhaps it was because she couldn't, that the little catch in her throat wouldn't let her. Anyhow, it devolved upon Legs to open the conversation with a little yawn as, with wildly wagging tail, he pawed the door frantically in front of her, in an ecstasy of canine joy. At first Carrots didn't notice; then, rubbing his sleeve across his

tear-stained cheeks, sniffing forlornly, he turned toward the gate to behold—of all persons in the world to see him crying—Miss Lucy! For a moment he stared at her in amazement, with his mouth open, and then like a little red meteor he crossed the stall to the door and grabbed her white-gloved hand in his two dirty little paws.

"Miss Lucy, Miss Lucy, yer not a goin' to sell Jupe—my Jupe, are yer?" he begged, the tears in his eyes.

Miss Lucy's eyes were swimming too as she looked down into the little, freckled, upturned face and nodded. It's a hard thing to sell a horse, you know, and especially after you've seen him grow from a colt and seen him win. Yet selling a luckless stable when you have to is quite different from buying one, and one has to have money to live.

"I have to, boy dear," she spoke almost in a whisper.

"But he's entered for the Suburban, Miss Lucy. He's entered, and the money's paid. And he'll win, Miss Lucy! He'll

win!" Like a torrent the words came, ringing with boyish conviction. "I'll ride him. I've worked him out. I know him, and he knows me—and he'll win for me, Miss Lucy! Honest yer Gawd he will!" Carrots thrust his hand impetuously backward toward the horse as his twitching, earnest little face pleaded with her, and a big black muzzle quivered over his fingers as the horse took playful little nibbles at them, nodding his head.

"See! See, Miss Lucy!" the boy cried brokenly, half crying, half laughing, as the feeling rushed over him. "See! He says he will! See! Old Jupe says he will, Miss Lucy! And he will! And it'll mean a pot of money! Oh, won't yer wait till after the race, Miss Lucy? Say yer will!" In utter abandon he pleaded.

And for some reason, she never knew why,—she had steeled herself to sell them all,—the eloquence of his broken pleading, the look on his tear-stained, quivering face, perhaps the love of it all bred in her bone, the incident of the nodding horse, or maybe just the little scene,—the three of them, the boy, the dog and the horse,—anyhow, something touched a chord somewhere in Miss Lucy's heart; for with a little choked sob she said yes, and with her handkerchief at her mouth ran from them.

AFTER that it didn't make any difference to Carrots whether or not the other horses were sold; he was busy; he had his work to do. On the day he had dreaded the horses were led out to the ring one by one, and he could hear the confused shouting at the sale; but his heart was glad with a fierce, wild gladness and he whistled as he crouched between the legs of a big black horse and rubbed them until they shone like black satin, for he knew that the notice posted on the stable door showed that "Jupiter, stallion, 16 hands, by Mars out of Cherry B, entered for the Suburban," was withdrawn from sale.

For three days, four days, a week, he worked, tending the horse like a baby, exercising him, working him out under the friendly direction of an old gray-haired swipec who in his palmy days had once had a stable of his own, increasing the workouts in length and speed gradually as the days went by, until the horse was fit. And Jupiter was

fit,—filled to the very skin with life and the devil, an ugly black yet beautiful demon in a shining silky coat that glistened in the sun, who pawed the earth and reared and kicked like Satan himself before the start, yet, when the word was given, went like a streak of shining black round the track, the very incarnation of power and speed for distance.

Meanwhile, out in the little Long Island cottage that, other than the old homestead in Kentucky, was all that Miss Lucy had after the bills had been paid, that little lady waited, seized alternately with regret and hope; now and again condemning herself momentarily for having weakened, but almost instantly hoping against hope that they might win, and thinking how with the stake the debts on the little old place at home could be paid. Then too there was a young man somewhere, a very earnest young man who wanted her, and whom Miss Lucy—well, to whom she could not find it in her heart to go while saddled with a load of debt. If Carrots only could!

So for days the preparations went on, with Jupiter showing better each day, until the old swipec checked as he saw the horse swing in great, long strides round the course under the guidance of a little, bare-headed, red-haired tike, and, noting the way the horse responded to the boy's merest whim, he borrowed all that he could scrape together, betting it on Jupiter at good odds.

Carrots? Well, Carrots always grinned when he slipped to the ground. And Legs! Legs, chained in a stall to prevent his running on the track during workouts, always welcomed them in a wild ecstasy of tail-wagging dog joy, jumping on his master, and barking whole pants of delight in short, quick, shrill, staccato barks.

Five days more—four days more! Miss Lucy came to see them then every day, to watch the workouts and to cheer them with her presence or a word. And as she watched Miss Lucy smiled. Surely Jupiter was ready! Perhaps, after all, Carrots might—The memory of other things came to her,—of the old home and of someone not as all like Carrots, but big and strong, who called her his Little Girl. If Carrots only could!

Meanwhile, out on the track, all unconscious of anything save that she—Miss Lucy—was watching him, a little red-haired tike sat on top of a great, black plunging stallion as if he was glued to the saddle and guided him with a smile. Old Jupe was fit, and Miss Lucy was there—what more could he ask?

BUT up at the edge of the stand a man who watched then did not smile either at the speed of the horse, at the little coddler on his back, or at the glowing face of the girl. Instead, Mattern, as he looked at a stop watch in his hand, shook his head and scowled. He knew Jupiter, and he had promised Miss Lucy to win the Suburban with him if she would only—At the memory his face grew white. Maybe the girl might have a chance after all against The Czar, the horse he was training for Abercrombie. But the combination of a broken sport, a red-headed kid, and a girl couldn't beat him, even with Jupiter! It was foolish! Yet, nevertheless, as Mattern saw the boy dismount and Miss Lucy greet him with a smile, he shook his head.

Later, as he strolled over by the stable that housed the single Roderick entry, he heard a shrill, joyful yawn—

*Continued on page 16.*



"It was a sad Miss Lucy that leaned over and watched them."